

mortality of the province—the country around—was 4.03 per cent. This mortality is much higher than has been observed lately in any English city; but it does not prove that Venice is not, as Dr. Raimann contends, an eligible residence in some stages of consumption.—*Brit. Ann. Med.*, and Dr. RAIMANN'S *Medicinische Jahrbücher des Otrichen Staates*, N. 3, 1837.

57. *Animal Magnetism*.—It would appear from our Journals that animal magnetism is making decided progress in London, and that some very distinguished men of that capital have become converts to a greater or less extent, to its verity.

It is to be hoped that now so many able men have their attention directed to the subject, that whatever modicum of truth there may be in this supposed power will be established, and that the great amount of fallacy which is mixed with it will be fully and irrefragably exposed.

In the mean time the following extract, from a communication to the Editor of the *Lancet* on the subject, by Dr. Sigmond, will be read with interest.

"I entered the field of inquiry as a sceptic, and as such, after my inquiries, I remain, as to the belief that any individual is in possession of a power, save that which the strong mind exerts over the weak one, by which he can exercise a preternatural effect over the human frame. I totally disbelieve the existence of any fluid which can, at the will of an operator, be made to pass from his body into that of another, and thus, at his command, produce unwonted sensation.

"In the course, however, of my imitations of the operations I have seen performed by others, I have observed certain most singular phenomena to arise, with which I was previously unacquainted, and which, I think, are of some value, and which, by the cautious investigation of the highly intellectual men who are constantly seeking to add to the means of prolonging life, and rendering it happier, may yet be found to lead to some physiological and psychological facts. I merely wish to state what I have observed, and to offer to show that certain consequences result from a peculiar kind of manipulation, which may easily be acquired, and which, if practised with dexterity, in some instances, might be productive of considerable influence in different conditions of the body.

"Some weeks since the Baron Du Potet de Sennevoy, did me the honour to invite me to be present at a trial of his magnetic power at the *University College Hospital*. I there saw him perform a series of actions upon different individuals, and he, in two instances, produced what may be termed artificial sleep upon two females, and this was the full extent of his success; his other attempts were failures. The successful cases, however, arrested my attention; they seemed to be the result of simple means, nor could there, at least I thought, be a doubt that the same power existed in any individual who chose to exert it. This species of magnetism, I must observe, differed very materially from what I had seen practised many years since by a pupil of Dr. Maineduc, at Bath; it had less pretension, and was much more practicable. From the little opportunity I had of judging of the Baron Du Potet, I drew the conclusion in my own mind, that he felt an honest conviction that he was possessed of a peculiar faculty, and most distinctly do I acquit him of any intention of playing upon the credulity of those by whom he was surrounded; but I feel that I have a right, with the same candour, to say, that I do not think that he is aware how he produces the extraordinary effects that followed his manipulations.

"I immediately determined to investigate the subject, and for that purpose tried a great number of experiments; but I was most unwilling, for a great length of time, to make my observations at all public, because I thought that I might be accused of seeking notoriety by investigating a subject which rather belonged to the community than to the profession, and one which seemed to be addressed to the popular feeling so easily excited, rather than to the calm and dispassionate consideration of the followers of science. Finding, however, that two distinguished members of the profession, Dr. Elliotson and Mr. Mayo, thought the subject worthy their attention, I persevered in my observations; and, added to this, I was invited by an illustrious individual, whose regard for the medical profession, and for every thing connected with it, I have, from my official position, had opportunities of witnessing and admiring. Earl Stanhope not only attended the Baron in his visits to the hospital, but devoted the energies of his highly-culti-

vated mind to an examination of the merits of the system, and he did me the honour to express his wish that I should prosecute the labours I had commenced. As a lecturer, too, I thought this a subject intimately connected with therapeutic powers, and as, by the publicity of your Journal, I am standing before the profession, I have felt that I am not intruding myself by giving the result of my experiments. These have been performed, of course, with the full certainty that I possessed no peculiar power which could be productive of any effect that might not attend upon the exertions of any other individual. The extent of my examination has been such as to satisfy me that I can produce a sleep of a very unusual character, by certain manipulations which do not require me to be in actual contact with the person upon whom the operation is intended to be performed; that I have acquired a certain degree of experience, by which I know how to accommodate the manipulations for the purpose required; and that I can communicate to another individual, in a short space of time, all the information necessary for the production of this sleep.

"I commenced my series of experiments by imitating the actions of the Baron Du Potet. My first subjects were of the uneducated class; but I found them so prone to believe in the marvellous—so anxious for extraordinary results, that they deceived both themselves and me. I have since tried the same manipulations upon the higher classes, and though I find them much more sensitive to every impression, and their nervous system more easily acted upon, and although, occasionally, the imagination has led some of them away, yet I have succeeded in giving a very peculiar sleep, amounting almost to stupor, to a vast number of individuals. I have constantly found females much more susceptible of the influence than men; nor does it produce upon them all precisely the same state of sleep. For while in some it is a sort of trance, during which, as often occurs in that unnatural state, pain is scarcely felt, in others it produces hysteria, convulsions, and I have likewise known fainting occur. The most remarkable case that has fallen under my observation, and which, while it excited in me great anxiety, and the deepest interest, has taught me to prosecute my researches with extreme caution, has occurred to me within the last two days. I was enjoying the hospitality of a most amiable family in Fitzroy-square, when animal magnetism became the topic of conversation, and I related the trials I had already made. One of the young ladies proposed to become the subject of experiment, to which I very willingly assented; for, having on former occasions attended her during momentary sickness, I was fully aware of the natural strength of her constitution, and the absence of that nervous temperament which renders this system totally inapplicable. I began what are technically called "the passes." They, as is not unusual, excited laughter and incredulity. I proceeded, for about five minutes, and then stopped and inquired if any sensation was produced, and the answer was, "a slight sleepiness;" and ridicule was again thrown upon the subject. I recommenced the manipulations; I observed the eyelids falling, and at last they closed; but, as the same incredulous smile remained, I persevered for three or four minutes, when I, almost doubting whether any influence had been produced, inquired what the feelings were; to this no answer was returned. I found my young friend was in the most complete trance I had ever yet witnessed as the result of my magnetism. The stupor was most profound; and I then tried the usual means to arouse her, but they were vainly exercised. After a few minutes I found the hands become icy-cold, the face lost its natural hue, and became perfectly pallid; the extremities became quite cold; the respiration was imperceptible; the stimulus of light did not affect the eye; on speaking to her a faint smile was excited, and a quivering of the lower jaw, which seemed to indicate a wish but an incapability of answering; the pulse became gradually feebler, whilst the external appearance altogether bore such a decidedly deathly cast that naturally some apprehension was excited amongst her family, by whom she was surrounded. Of course I could not but feel a certain degree of anxiety and regret that I had produced such a state, and much uneasiness at the thought that I had inflicted a moment's alarm to my kind friends. These feelings were, however, less acute, from the full knowledge I entertained that the family had long reposed the most perfect confidence in me, and that no member of it had that nervous susceptibility, which would have embarrassed me had any untoward accident presented itself.

"I placed the perfectly unconscious subject of this distressing scene in a horizontal position, and directed the application of warmth and of friction to the extremities. Circulation and animal heat were gradually excited, but she presented a most singular appearance of suspended animation. In this condition she remained more than four hours, for I had commenced a little after ten in the evening, and it was about half past two, that, on some slight effort being made to rouse her, she uttered some of the most piercing shrieks I have ever heard; there were convulsive efforts to raise the limbs; the face, too, became convulsed; she opened her eyes and stared wildly around; she was placed in the upright posture, and seemed sensible. Advantage was taken of this circumstance to carry her to her apartment; before, however, she could reach it, she fell into a profound slumber, but its character was more natural. She was placed in her bed, appearing perfectly composed; the countenance had acquired its natural hue; the respiration was perfectly easy, and the pulse natural. In this state she remained during the whole of the day, until 9 o'clock in the evening, once only opening her eyes, and addressing a few words to an anxious and affectionate sister who never left her side. In the evening the young lady joined her family perfectly restored to her wonted cheerfulness. She expressed no complaint whatever. She stated that the feelings that first came over her were those of extreme quiet and repose,—a species of ecstacy,—a gradual languor seemed to steal over her; that she heard something passing around her; felt an inclination, but an utter impossibility, to reply. The first waking up she, however, described as almost terrific. It was as if she was bursting from a narrow and confined space, and as if she arose from interminable darkness. The lesson that I have thus learnt will not be lost upon me.

"It is upon the respiration that my efforts are directed, and the principle is precisely that which is called "stealing the breath away;" besides which, by the undulations of the air caused by the movements of the hands an unusual cold is produced which very much assists the effect. The art seems to me to consist in obliging the individual again to inspire, by the nostril, the carbon he has already expired, whilst the currents of air caused by the extended fingers produce some effect upon the facial nerves, thus inducing the eyelids to fall down. Association of ideas is very strikingly evinced by those who have been once magnetised, for then the slightest quantity of manipulation is necessary; the patient evidently having acquired a habit of inhalation by the nostrils. It is from the centre of the nose downwards that the effect is most speedily induced, and the drawing of the hand downwards from the brow, so as to effect the eyes, I find to be quite unnecessary towards producing the effect. I do not consider the process I have employed by any means perfect; and I have little doubt, when the attention of the profession is drawn to the subject, that considerable improvement may result; at the same time I am persuaded that the manipulations may be the cause of very great alarm. I have now exercised this art upon nearly a hundred persons, and with very general success in the fairer part of creation; I have quieted delirium and given sleep where it has been for many nights vainly solicited. I have magnetised in the presence of many medical men who have been in attendance on the Baron Du Potet's lectures, and they have declared that the sleep appears identical with that he produces, and that it is proved by the fact that animals may be sent to sleep by the same movements. I am very anxious that the members of the profession should try the same process."